



# TRACK TIME



# A New Horizon for Hendrick

Earnhardt now transitions into the broadcast booth with NBC's NASCAR coverage and will run a NASCAR XFINITY Series race for JR Motorsports.

To further accelerate the 2018 season of change, Kasey Kahne is moving to Leavine Family Racing this year after six seasons with Hendrick.

## A NUMBERS GAME

The 12-time NASCAR Cup Series team champion Hendrick Motorsports is also executing a move that honors both the present and past generations of the sport. It is introducing the No. 9 NAPA AUTO PARTS Chevrolet Camaro to its four-car team with Chase Elliott at the wheel.

The number has special significance. Elliott raced the No. 9 to the 2014 NASCAR Xfinity Series title, and his Hall of Fame father Bill Elliott drove it to 38 Cup-level wins and the 1988 series championship. Last season, Elliott drove the No. 24 Chevy for Hendrick Motorsports.

"I know what the '9' means to Chase and his whole family," Rick Hendrick said in a statement in 2017. The owner of Hendrick Motorsports continued: "They've contributed so much to our sport, and I'm happy we can honor that history by bringing the number back."

## ANOTHER BIG CHANGE

Rookie William Byron also will take over an iconic number this season – the No. 24 Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet made famous by four-time Cup Series champion Jeff Gordon.

Here are some quick facts on both No. 9 and No. 24, provided by Hendrick Motorsports.



The year 2018 is one of change for Hendrick Motorsports. Its most popular driver, Dale Earnhardt Jr., who won the Most Popular Driver Award for a 15th straight year in 2017 and earned the Bill France Award of Excellence, has retired.

### NO. 9

- Will make its Hendrick Motorsports debut with Chase Elliott in 2018.
- Hall of Fame driver Bill Elliott raced it in the NASCAR Cup Series for the first time in 1976.
- 1988 Cup Series championship with Bill Elliott; raced to 38 of his 44 career Cup wins.
  - 2014 NASCAR Xfinity Series championship with Chase Elliott.
- 53 combined points-paying wins in Cup Series competition with five drivers.

### NO. 24

- First fielded by Hendrick Motorsports with Gordon in 1992; driven by Gordon until 2015.
- Raced by Chase Elliott in 2017, who debuted in 2016 and won Cup Series rookie of the year.
- Gordon won four Cup Series championships in the No. 24 and all 93 of its points-paying Cup victories; race wins include three Daytona 500s and a record five Brickyard 400s.

# 2018 Hall of Fame Class

Every new racing season starts with the sport giving a nod to the most distinguished drivers of its past. The 2018 NASCAR Hall of Fame induction ceremony was no different.

The sport's elite gathered to celebrate true legends and their impact on NASCAR. The 2018 class features a broad range of talent — from its first champion to its most recognizable voice.

## RED BYRON

Byron was a man of many “firsts.” He won NASCAR’s first sanctioned race on the Daytona Beach Road Course in 1948 and claimed the first season-long championship in the NASCAR Modified Division that same year.

Other “firsts” by Byron included the inaugural championship in NASCAR’s Strictly Stock Division. Byron competed for the last time in NASCAR racing in 1951 and died in 1960.

## KEN SQUIER

The 1970 co-founder of the Motor Racing Network, Squier called the memorable 1979 Daytona 500 that many argue put NASCAR on the map. He also coined the nickname “Great American Race” for NASCAR’s most presti-



gious event.

## RON HORNADAY JR.

Hornaday competed in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series since its inception in 1995, winning a series-best 51 races and an unparalleled four series championships.

## RAY EVERNHAM

A three-time champion

crew chief, Evernham is credited with revolutionizing the sport’s approach to pit crew performance. Evernham teamed with legendary Jeff Gordon to win 47 Cup races.

## ROBERT YATES

In the most emotional moment of the hall of fame induction ceremony, the posthumous induction of team owner and engine builder



Robert Yates was one to remember. Yates died of cancer on Oct. 2 but wrote a message for the special occasion prior to his passing.

“When I started in racing, this was not the goal,” he stated. “All I wanted to do throughout my career was win races. I would always say, ‘I

don’t race for the money. I race to win.’ For me, that’s what it’s always been about, but to be part of this year’s induction class is a true honor. There are a lot of other people I want to thank because this isn’t really about me; it’s about those who gave me the opportunity to do something I love.”

# Danica's Storybook Ending?

**A**fter an up-and-down NASCAR career, Danica Patrick is saying goodbye to big-time auto racing this season. The Daytona 500 and the Indianapolis 500 are being called the “Danica Double” as peers and fans help send off one of the most groundbreaking female athletes in any sport.

The Daytona 500 will be the final NASCAR Cup race of Patrick's career. She will drive for Premier Motorsports in its No. 7 Chevrolet, completing a reunion with her first crew chief Tony Eury, Jr.

## HISTORY MAKER

Patrick drove for Stewart-Haas Racing all five of her full-time Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series seasons from 2013 to 2017.

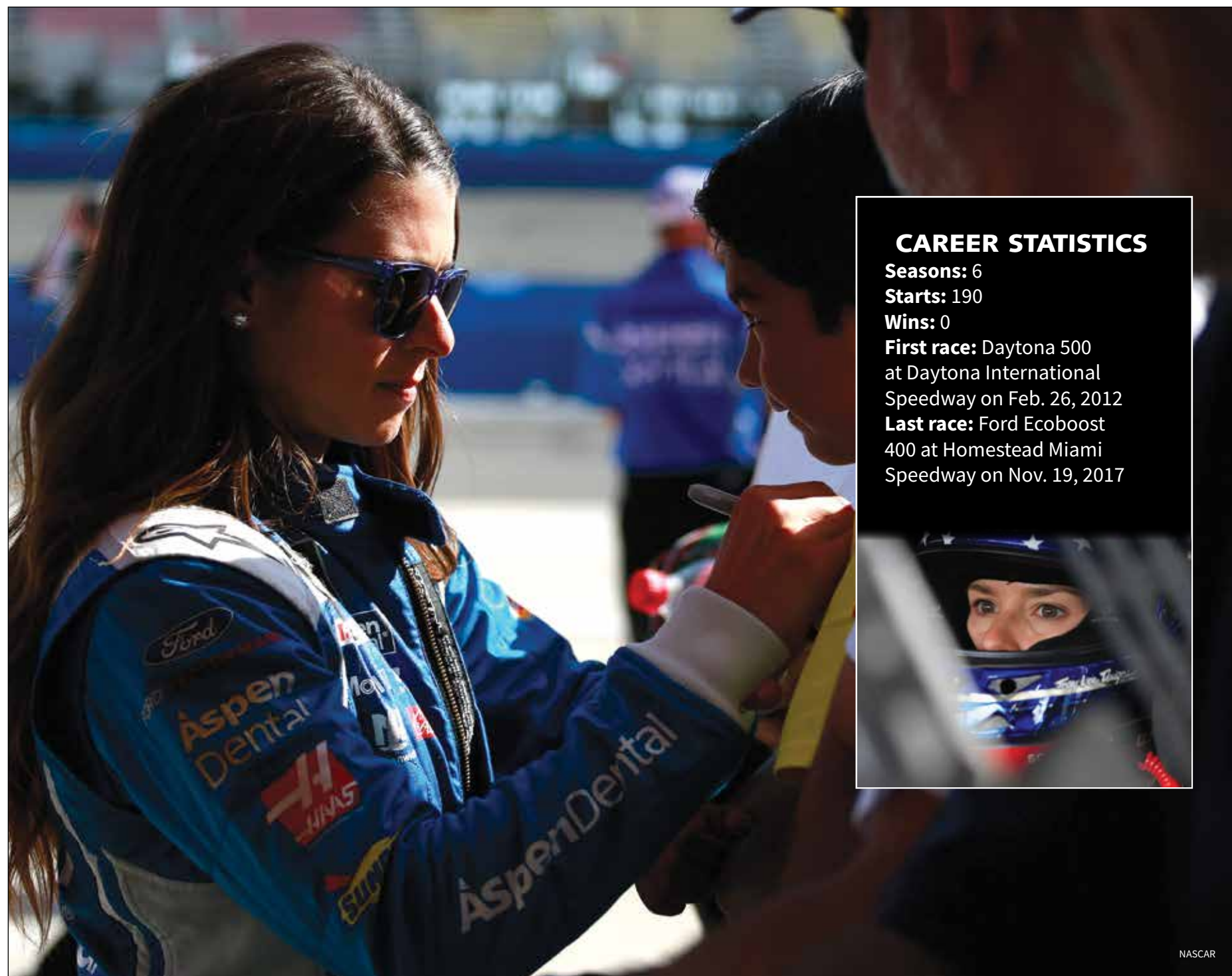
It is fitting that she wraps up her career with appearances in the Daytona 500 and Indy 500 — two of the world's most renowned races. She is the only woman to have led laps both in the Daytona 500 (nine) and the Indy 500 (29).

Patrick won the pole for the 2013 Daytona 500 and finished eighth. She has six top-10s in seven Indy 500 starts with a best of third place in 2009.

Before moving to NASCAR, Patrick was the most successful woman to compete in American open-wheel racing and the only woman to ever win an IndyCar race. Her early-career performance earned her a 2005 Rookie of the Year award for both the Indianapolis 500 and the full IndyCar season.

## OFF THE TRACK

Patrick has plenty to keep her busy away from the race track.



## CAREER STATISTICS

**Seasons:** 6  
**Starts:** 190  
**Wins:** 0  
**First race:** Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway on Feb. 26, 2012  
**Last race:** Ford EcoBoost 400 at Homestead Miami Speedway on Nov. 19, 2017

She recently released a book, “Pretty Intense,” launched a clothing line named “Warrior,”

and has her own California vineyard, “Somnium.” She also has been named

one of TIME Magazine’s “Most Influential People.” A true pop culture icon, Patrick’s appear-

ance in 13 GoDaddy Super Bowl commercials is the most of all time among celebrities.

# Hamlin vs. Elliott

When the NASCAR Cup Series season kicks off Feb. 18 with the Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway, all eyes will be on two drivers who made a big splash in 2017. And not because of their driving.

The feud between Chase Elliott and Denny Hamlin is heating up and looks to continue after some offseason back-and-forth between the drivers. NASCAR fans love a bit of drama with their racing, and these two mainstays have been great sources over the past few months.

## RETALIATION

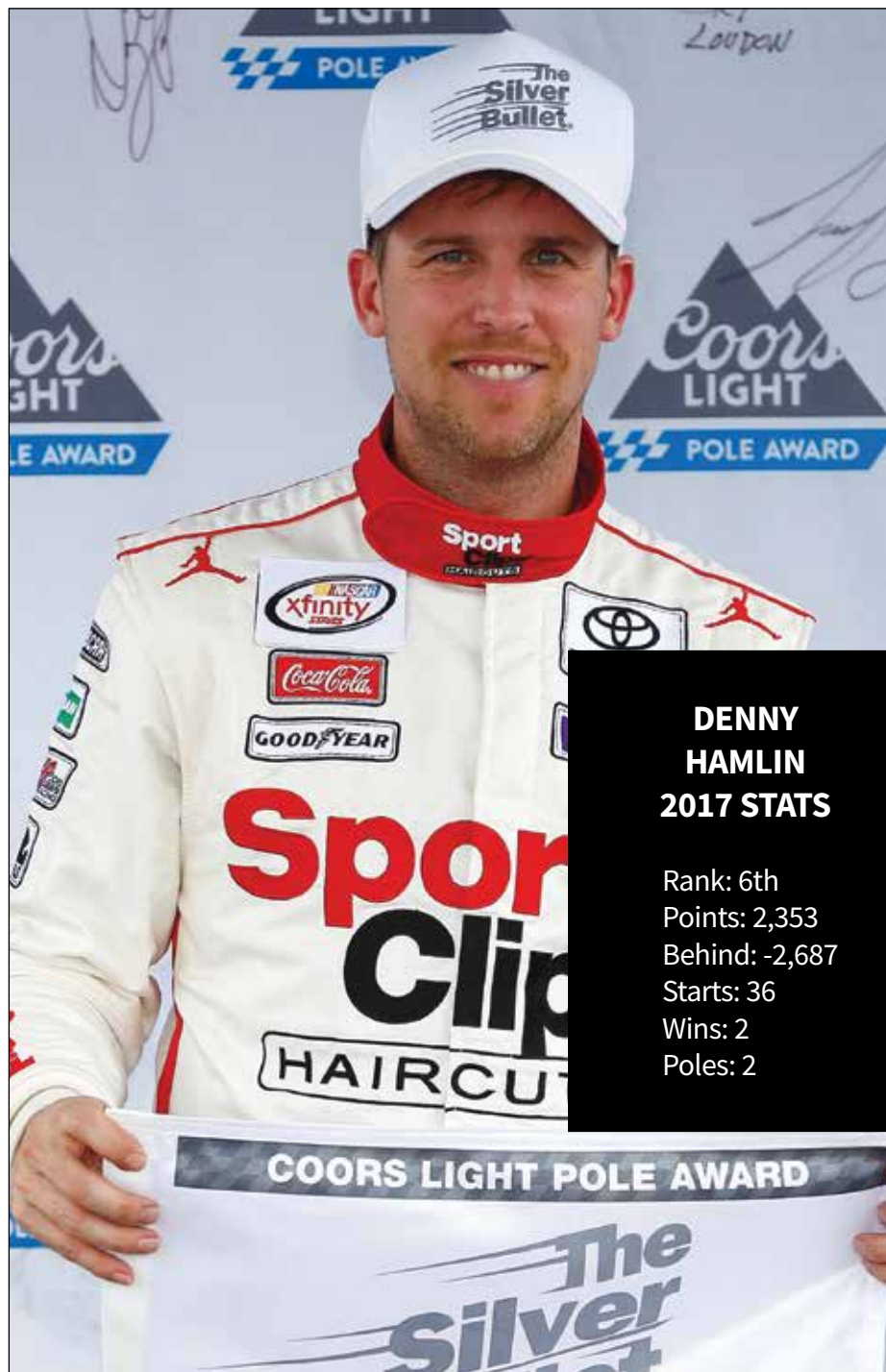
Hamlin dominated the playoff race at Phoenix International Raceway and was in a prime position to advance to the Championship 4 round.

Enter Elliott.

As retaliation for a similar move by Hamlin during the opening race of the playoffs, Elliott bumped Hamlin into the wall late in the race. The collision caused one of Hamlin's tires to go down and he crashed into the wall a few laps later, ultimately ending his chances for a race victory and his first career championship.

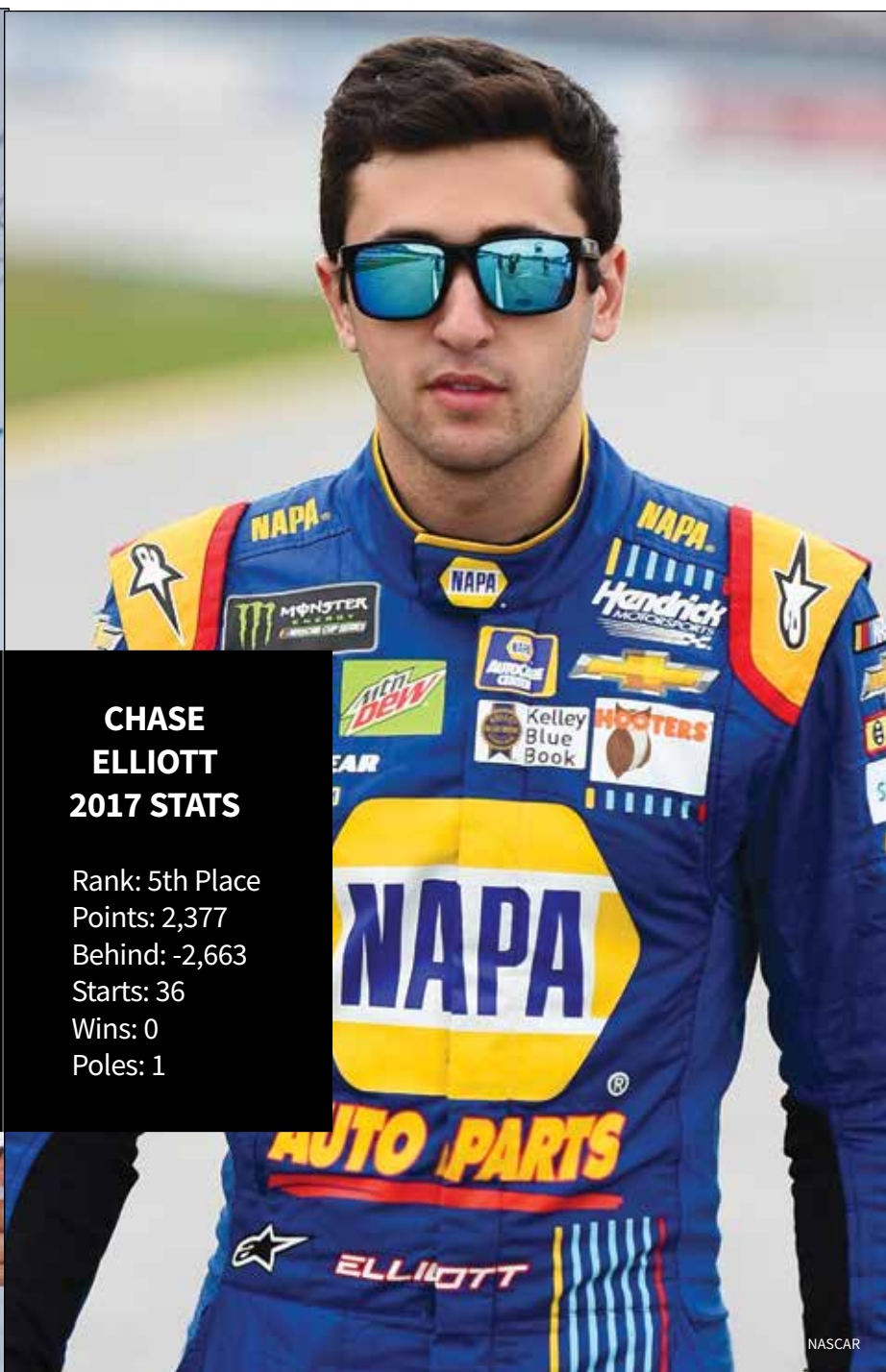
## TWO WEEKS EARLIER

What drove Elliott to retaliate? With two laps to go in the opening race of the 2017 round of eight, Elliott also looked to be on his way to victory. Hamlin spun Elliott out, took the lead and knocked Elliott out of contention.



**DENNY  
HAMLIN  
2017 STATS**

Rank: 6th  
Points: 2,353  
Behind: -2,687  
Starts: 36  
Wins: 2  
Poles: 2



**CHASE  
ELLIOTT  
2017 STATS**

Rank: 5th Place  
Points: 2,377  
Behind: -2,663  
Starts: 36  
Wins: 0  
Poles: 1

Hamlin was booed by fans during his post-race interview, setting the stage for

Elliott's actions in Phoenix. If there is any doubt as to whether more controversy is

on the way in 2018, Hamlin's offseason comments to NASCAR.com are clear: "The

way we race each other has been set and will be set for a while."



# Xfinity and Truck Series

**T**he story of the NASCAR Xfinity Series and NASCAR Camping World Truck Series is young blood.

Xfinity lost its champion with William Byron graduating to the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series. Similarly, NASCAR Camping World Truck Series champion Christopher Bell moves on to the Xfinity Series this year.

The departures of Byron and Bell have opened doors for new drivers looking to make an impact at the professional level.

Here are three breakout candidates from both Xfinity and Camping World Truck Series to keep your eye on this season:

## **XFINITY** **Tyler Reddick**

Reddick won the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series title three times and moves to full-time Xfinity Series driver with JR Motorsports. He made 18 starts as a Chip Ganassi Racing entry, finishing with a 16.7-place average finish. And although he eventually scored a win at Kentucky, fans – and ownership – are looking for much more from Reddick this season.

## **Daniel Hemric**

After a strong finish to his Xfinity Series rookie campaign in 2017, Hemric looks to carry his momentum into a solid sophomore season. According to NASCAR.com statistics, Hemric's 8.73-place average finish was more than seven positions better than his first-half average (15.88). He was also one of two rookies to qualify into the Championship 4 round in 2017.

## **Christopher Bell**

The 2017 NASCAR Camping World Truck Series champion earned a full-time promotion to Xfinity and Joe Gibbs Racing in 2018. Bell started eight races in the series last season and

left everyone excited for a bright future.

## **TRUCK SERIES** **Ben Rhodes**

Rhodes ended his 2017 campaign with a positive pass differential and performed best on 1-mile tracks and 1.5-mile intermediates. This is good news for Rhodes, as these two track types are featured in over half of the 2018 schedule, according to NASCAR.com.

## **Ryan Truex**

The younger brother of the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series champion, Truex finished inside the top five in 33

percent of his starts in 2017. He drives the No. 11 Chevrolet Camaro for Kaulig Racing. Truex won the 2009 NASCAR Camping World East Series Championship as a 17-year-old high school student at Southern Regional High School, setting him up for professional success at a young age.

## **Justin Haley**

Haley performed best in 2017 with continuous racing. His 10.45-place average finish in races with fewer than six restarts was over three positions better than his average in races with eight or more (13.6), according to NASCAR.com.

# Challenging the Champ

**M**artin Truex, Jr. put together a dominant performance in 2017 to win the NASCAR Monster Energy Cup Series championship. Can he do it again?

Truex, 37, has the veteran leadership to pull it off. He had only finished in the top 10 once prior in his career entering the 2017 season. Now coming into his 13th campaign, he is looking to follow up on his breakout year that included:

- Eight wins;
- Three poles;
- 9.4 average finish; and
- 2,253 laps led.

## A STAR ON THE RISE

Truex' path to success has been anything but smooth. His career features a six-year span from 2007 to 2013 during which he did not win a single race.

And while he only finished in 11th place in the championship standings in the 2016 season, he did so after winning a career-high four races. This more than doubled his career win total and put him into strong position for much of the season. Issues in the playoffs took him out of contention, but it was the spark Truex needed to build momentum heading into the



2017 season.

## TOYOTA SUCCESS

Truex attributes much of his success to his team and car. He drives the No. 78 car for Furniture Row Racing, a Toyota-powered team. Toyota had the upper hand for much

of the 2017 season, winning 14 of the last 19 races and 16 races overall.

Neither Chevrolet nor Ford had more than 10 victories. NASCAR enthusiasts are expecting more of the same results this season, even as Ford fields a strong collection

of drivers and Chevy unveils its Camaro to much fanfare.

## A CLASS ACT

No matter what he does on the track in 2018, Truex has built a reputation as a generous man in his community. He was named the National

Motorsports Press Association's Driver of the Year in 2017 for his performance both on and off the track.

The Martin Truex Jr. Foundation raises awareness and financial support for pediatric and ovarian cancer.

# New Schedule Tweaks

Fans in the Western part of the United States will see a bit more NASCAR this season as the new schedule brings drivers to Las Vegas and Phoenix in March.

Out east, fans in Richmond and Charlotte are excited to have their raceways featured as new tracks for the playoffs.

See the full Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series schedule below and check out [NASCAR.com](http://NASCAR.com) for the full Xfinity Series and Camping World Truck Series schedules.

**Daytona 500:** Feb. 18, FOX  
**Atlanta:** Feb. 25, FOX  
**Las Vegas:** Mar. 4, FOX  
**Phoenix:** Mar. 11, FOX  
**Auto Club:** Mar. 18, FOX  
**Martinsville:** Mar. 25, FS1  
**Texas:** Apr. 8, FS1  
**Bristol:** Apr. 15, FOX  
**Richmond:** Apr. 21, FOX  
**Talladega:** Apr. 29, FOX  
**Dover:** May 6, FS1  
**Kansas:** May 12, FS1  
**All-Star Race:** May 19, FS1

**Charlotte:** May 27, FOX  
**Pocono:** Jun 3, FS1  
**Michigan:** Jun 10, FOX  
**Sonoma:** Jun 24, FS1  
**Chicagoland:** Jul. 1, NBCSN  
**Daytona:** Jul. 7, NBC  
**Kentucky:** Jul. 14, NBCSN  
**New Hampshire:** Jul. 22, NBCSN  
**Pocono:** Jul. 29, NBCSN  
**Watkins Glen:** Aug. 5, NBC  
**Michigan:** Aug. 12, NBCSN  
**Bristol:** Aug. 18, NBCSN  
**Darlington:** Sep. 2, NBCSN  
**Indianapolis:** Sep. 9, NBCSN  
**Las Vegas:** Sep. 16, NBCSN  
**Richmond:** Sep. 22, NBCSN  
**Charlotte:** Sept. 30, NBC  
**Dover:** Oct. 7, NBCSN  
**Talladega:** Oct. 14, NBC  
**Kansas:** Oct. 21, NBC  
**Martinsville:** Oct. 28, NBCSN  
**Texas:** Nov. 4, NBCSN  
**Phoenix:** Nov. 11, NBC  
**Homestead-Miami:** Nov. 18, NBC